

MIND CONTROL

By

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The "mind" is a name given to the policy of affirming one's finitude. The assertion of individuality is known as "mind." It is a pressure exerted upon the limitedness of our personality, and there is no such thing as mind independently existing, as we may imagine it to be.

Childlike considerations may form the opinion that the mind is something moving inside the body, like a ball of mercury changing its position frequently, within the body only. No such thing is the mind. It cannot be located as "something." It is, to explain it precisely, the body asserting itself: "I am." This body feels "it is." That vehement feeling of physical existence is termed the "mind" for purpose of easy comprehension.

Fickleness is the nature of the mind. It will never occupy a particular position because the physical affirmation spoken of is a tantalizing phenomenon, not sure of itself. The body does not finally know what it wants; that is to say, the mind, so-called, does not know what it wants. This is so because there is a contradiction between the affirmation of individuality through the physical body, and the infinite longings that seem to be there, lying at the back of the personality. The infinite longing contradicts the finite affirmation and, therefore, life is before us as a great contradiction.

Everywhere we see problems, and no problem is finally capable of solution. Kings and ministers, statesmen, work hard throughout their lives to solve the problems of life. But they go, and the problems remain, because life is constituted of an insoluble contradiction. Inasmuch as the very basis of our existence is contradiction, no one can find a solution to it.

But, is there not a way? The very longing within us is a pointer to the problem capable of solution. Our longings are so firm, so convincing, so irrefutable, so unrelenting that we seem to be enshrining within our own selves a non-finite impulse simultaneously with the finite impulse of bodily affirmation.

The control of the mind is, therefore, equal to the finding of the relation between the finite and the Infinite. Great persistence, great understanding and capacity to discriminate is here called for. Ancient masters and seekers of truth, to one of whom I made reference yesterday, had their own way of solution. Sometimes the solutions seem to be very humorous, but very practical. The mind has to be handled in an intelligent manner, but persistently.

When we drive a nail continuously on the wall, without changing the spot, with the determination to drive the nail into the wall, it will go inside and yield to our pressure. But, if we strike at one place and find a brick, at another place a stone, in a third place something else, we will not succeed in driving the nail at all.

In a similar manner, several methods have to be adopted in a continuous determination to achieve a purpose. This determination takes various phases of expression. It is not that everyone can manifest this determination in the same way. There is a world under every hat, they say, and there is a different type of solution within every individual. My solution is not yours, and yours is not somebody else's. Peculiarity, novelty, and a kaleidoscopic character of the method to be adopted, -all these are some of the features of spiritual determination. There are some stories of humorous instances adopted by great saints and sages. We will be inclined to laugh at these analogies, but they are very practical and prove very useful.

There was a great saint called Swami Narayana. His followers are very large in the area of Gujarat, though he hailed from Uttar Pradesh. One day he observed some villagers struggling with a cow. They were unable to milk it because it was giving a kick the moment anybody approached it. They could not go near the cow. Whenever it felt that somebody was coming near it, it would kick with its foot.

Swami Narayana was not only a saint but also a seeker in himself. He told these villagers, "I shall find a way of stopping this kicking." He took a long stick and, sitting a little away from the cow, slowly touched the cow's leg with that stick; it gave a kick immediately. After a few seconds he again touched it; it gave another kick. He sat there for the whole day, without taking food from morning to evening, doing only one work, -touching the leg of the cow with the stick. To the surprise of all the people who were witnessing this phenomenon, for a continuous twelve hours, this touching went on. How long will the cow give a kick? It is also a living being. It got fed up, tired, and stopped kicking. Then he told them to milk the cow; it never kicked afterwards.

The mind is turbulent in some way of this kind. It has to be treated in the same way as the *swami* treated the cow. Whatever we say, the mind will not agree. It has its own voice and something else to say, quite different from what we are wanting it to do. If we say, "Do this," it will say, "No, I will do another thing."

There was a couple, husband and wife. The wife always did the opposite of what the husband said. If he said, "Today will you prepare some good meal with coconut?" she would say, "No, I will not use coconut." She would make a thin, watery *dal* (lentils) and give him. Then, he would say, "Today I am not feeling well, so don't make any dish. I want only a little thin watery *dal*." "No, I will make a good dish for you," she said, and she made a sumptuous meal, and he took it. "Today some venerable guests are coming," he said; "Will you cook some good meal for them?" She said, "No, I will not. I will give only water to the guests." Then, after some days, when the visitors were actually expected, he told the wife, "Today I am not expecting anybody and I don't think any special meal is necessary." "No, I will make a very good meal for twenty people," she said, and she cooked twenty people's food; the visitors came and they were fed.

This is what the mind is telling us: "I will not listen to you. You may say anything, but I have some other way." How will you deal with it? Use the same way as the husband or Swami Narayana handled the situation.

Sometimes, we may have failure when offering a frontal attack to the mind. A direct attack is not always going to be a success even in military operations. Great wisdom is to be exercised. We have to retreat, we have to move forward, we have to become invisible for some time, if necessary.

There was a fierce bull. If it saw any human being from a distance, it would make a hissing noise through its nose. There was a gentleman who decided to control that bull. How will he control it, if he cannot go near it? What he did was that he built a fence around that fierce bull. Now, one step for success has been taken, -the bull cannot go outside the limit of the fence. Previously, it could roam anywhere and attack anyone on the road; now it cannot go, because a fence is there. Likewise, do to the mind. It goes everywhere, roaming throughout the world, wanting anything and rejecting anything. Put a fence over it: within this limit only it must operate. Give it whatever it wants within the limitation; do not deny everything.

The bull was within the fence. The next step was that the gentleman took a bundle of green grass, thrust his hand through the wire fence and showed the bull the grass. The bull slowly came near. The man knew very well the ferocity of the bull, -he could not touch it. But, because of the grass, it forgot the man outside and was thinking only of the grass. He fed it every day; daily feeding it with grass was his only work, so that the bull became acquainted with the personality of this individual. Every day it was seeing the same person. Then, with or without the grass he could gently touch the bull's forehead, and it would just look up. Then he lessened the circle of the fence and made it more restricted, so that it was not more than a few square yards; he could go on patting the bull with his hand continuously, and feeding it with green grass.

The acquaintance became so intense that the bull started slowly licking the hand of the gentleman. It developed an affection for him. Previously, fierce it was; animosity was its nature. It became friendly because of this affectionate treatment; it yielded to his touch. Then he removed the fence and went near it with the grass. Without the fencing he went near it, touched it, gave the grass, patted it on the head, and even sat on its back. Can you imagine the success, to the surprise of all people?

The ways of saints, the methods adopted by masters and seekers of yore, are very interesting. They are not always logically rigid, but a beautifully construed methodology of handling the mind.

I have told you many years back, perhaps, a Sufi saint's story. There was a great mystic called Jalaluddin Rumi in the Middle Ages. He had many followers. He recited an instance of how a person can change himself by changing his circumstances. There was a Sufi guru who had several followers and disciples, many of whom were poor Arabs, but very devoted to their master. One of them came in the early morning to pay homage to his master. The master asked, "How are you, my dear boy?"

"Master, I am living in hell."

"What is the trouble with you?"

"I have one room only, which is a small area where I have my family, my wife and two children. There inside I cook my food. I have a camel which brays continuously, and there is a dog barking all night. We cannot sleep. You can imagine our condition. Don't you think, Master, that this is veritable hell?"

The master said, "There is no problem; I can solve this difficulty."

The obedience of disciples to the master was so amazing, especially in ancient times, that they would not argue with the *guru*. Though his suggestions may look funny, irrational, and sometimes unusual, the devotion and submission to the guru supersedes rationality. The *guru* told the disciple, "Tonight you tie the dog inside your house when you go to bed." The man could not understand what kind of solution this was, but obedience is obedience.

The dog made matters worse. It went on barking inside the room and howled throughout the night. Nobody slept even for a minute. The disciple went to the *guru* the next morning. The *guru* The man said, "I cannot say anything. It is worse than construed hell. The dog did not allow us to sleep."

"There is a solution for it. You have got a camel? Tie it inside."

"He thought, "What is this? Am I going to be alive?" But the *guru* is *guru*, and he did not say a word against him. He tied the camel inside the room. There was no space to sit. The camel occupied the entire area, making kicks and jumps, and the dog was barking also, the fireplace was giving sparks, the children were crying, the wife was standing only, and he was also sitting.

The next morning he went to the *guru* and said, "I cannot speak, Master. I am dying today. I think it is the last day for me. I thought it was hell; this is worse than hell."

"I will find a solution for it," the *guru* said. "Tie the camel out; put the dog also out."

He slept very well that night, - no noise, no disturbance of any kind. The next morning he went to the *guru*. The *guru* asked, "How are you?"

"Heaven, heaven!" he said.

"Heaven? Hey! You came to me in the beginning, saying it is hell. Now how has it become heaven?" he asked. "Do not complain."

The mind is a great mystery. It can deceive you every moment and tell you everything is wrong, -nothing is good anywhere, everybody is foolish, the world is a devil's abode and it is better to be rid of it. It will go on telling all kinds of things; yet, till the last moment of your breath, the desire to live long will not leave you. You may be a patient with incurable disease, utterly poverty stricken, but you would like to continue the existence in this body as much as possible. Nobody would like to abolish the personality, destroy one's individuality, negate one's existence.

What is it that you are longing for? Stories of this kind, analyses of this nature, will tell you that again here is a contradiction in your life. Your opinion about people and the world, and sometimes about your own predicament, contradicts the endless longing that you maintain within yourself for anything and everything. Death is a terror. Nothing can be worse than that, because it is the end of your existence. You will tolerate the end of anything that you possess, but you cannot tolerate the end of your being.

So, your affection centralises itself later on into a pin-pointed existence of your own location: "I must be; I do not want anything else. Let the world go, let all things leave me, but may I live long, may I persist, may I exist for ever and ever."

Who generates this feeling of endless longing, if not that which is your real nature? What kind of longing is this? In the beginning it is very nebulous and not clear to your mind. That is why you cannot answer the question of why you want to live long. There is no why for it; it is there, and it has to be accepted. For the final issue, there is no why. Whatever be your situation in this world, you would like to live for any number of years. Even if you are granted a blessing of ten thousand years of living, that cannot satisfy you because when you are completing the tenure of 9,999 years, the fear will strike you that only one year is left, -as powerful as the fear of death would be if you were to pass away earlier. So, length in life is not the solution, because how long will that length of life continue? It will end one day.

When the great seeker Nachiketas was offered longest life and all the glories of the world by the great master Yama, Nachiketas' reply was: *api sarvam jivitam alpameva, tavaiva vahas tava nrityagite*: "The longest life is short when it comes to an end." There is no such thing as long life because when it ends, it is short. So, what do you mean by saying that you want to live long?

Here again is a psychological contradiction before us. Actually, what insists on our continuing for a long time is not this body calling for a persistent existence, because the mind is clever enough to know that the body cannot last long. But, it wants to accumulate certain features that will give it the satisfaction of living long.

The central feature of this longing is the longing to have our own selves. "Know thyself and be free." Though we hear these admonitions a hundred times, we will make the common mistake of identifying the Self with this so-called person seated here: "Let me know my Atman (Self)." You will say "my Atman," as if you are going to possess it as a property. If the Atman is to be possessed by you, it stands outside you, like an object, like any other thing in the world. If you are going to possess the Atman, then who are you? Other than the Atman is the *anatman*. *Anatman* is nonexistence. Is non-existence trying to possess existence? Here is again a contradiction in our thinking.

Great discrimination, *vairagya*, is called for. Easily do we mistake the principle of *vairagya*. So many *Sadhus* (renunciates) are there, so many *vairagis* are there. They have all renounced everything. You may ask a *vairagi*: You have renounced everything; what are the things that you have renounced?

The immediate, quick reply may be: "I possess nothing. I have left everything that I had earlier. I have left the world; therefore, I have completed my renunciation."

If you have abandoned the world, where are you standing now? Are you sitting in the sky? Standing on the ground that is the earth, you are saying that you have renounced it. The world blows a breeze of various types on your personality every moment, saying that you cannot renounce the world, unless you renounce yourself first. The renouncer has to renounce himself, so that the renunciation may become complete.

But where is the meaning in renouncing one's own self? If the self is renounced, what remains? This difficulty will suddenly take possession of our own selves. There is really no such thing as renunciation of anything, because nothing in the world really belongs to you. How can you renounce a thing which has not actually become your property? Are you renouncing somebody else's belongings? The world is not under your control; therefore, how will you renounce it?

Here, renunciation has to be understood in the spirit that is within it. Renunciation is not an abandonment in the literal sense of the word, but a spirit that is maintained within, -a spirit of not belonging to anything, and a spirit of nothing actually belonging to one's own self. In this process of the determination of the spirit, the world stands united with you because of the fact that you are made of the same substance as the world of nature.

All humanity is inside you, with you, within you, and has taken possession of you. The principle of every individual in the world is inside you also, so that on different occasions you can manifest the character of any person in this world. Anything is inside you; only the proper button has to be pushed. All humanity is potentially present inside you. The world is potentially present inside you, inside in the sense of that personality of yours which is clubbed with the whole nature at the same time, and not this Mr. So-and-so personality.

Here is the difficulty that the mind will encounter every day. We cannot think in this manner because our education is purely empirical, outwardly motivated, and physically conditioned. But you stand a master of all things by renunciation, in the sense of belonging to the whole world,-the world belonging to you, and you yourself belonging to the world. The world stands, including all personalities and all individuals, all human beings, every created being, including yourself. The world stands renounced within itself. You become a world individual.

Such renunciates are world masters, because they are self masters. When the taste for things ceases, you have conquered the world; when the taste is conquered, the world is conquered. Taste of the tongue, taste of the eyes, taste of the ears, taste of the nostrils, taste of touch,-all these are tastes of one kind or the other. They persist till our death almost, because of the fact that we never succeeded in living as world individuals. We have never succeeded in maintaining the position of a world personality.

Can any one of you feel convinced within yourself that you are a world individual? "I do not merely belong to the world; it is not that the world belongs to me. I will stand as a meeting point of the world and the individuality of everybody." Unthinkable is this situation. A master-mind we call such people; a super-man, an incarnation, an *avatara*,-all sorts of names and nomenclatures are attributed to such achievements in a person who ceases to be a person and is at the same time a super-person.

Such renunciation precedes the understanding that is required to practise Yoga, which is real *sadhana*. The essence of this situation is that you cannot entertain little petty desires and then sit for meditation.

When you are seated in meditation, a kind of infinitude enters into you, as is suggested in the sutra of Patanjali: *prayatna shaithilya ananta samapattibhyam*: Steadiness in posture is possible by a comprehension of the infinitude that this world is. Relaxation and the concept of the Infinite will enable you to occupy a desired posture. Relaxation, -the nerves are tense, the muscles are tense, the mind is tense, the body is tense; they have to be released in a fashion akin to *yoganidra* (the sleep of yoga, where the body is resting but the mind is awake). It is not *nidra* (sleep); it is so called because of its resemblance to non-perception of anything outside, similar to *nidra*, the condition of sleep.

Before you sit in a posture for meditation, lie on your back. Stretch your arms aside. Take deep breathing: take in air through the nostrils and breathe out through the mouth, as you do generally, automatically, when you are tired after a long journey or hard work: "Oh God, the day's work is over, let me lie down!" You are not aware of anything at that time except that you want nothing but total relaxation. As the mind is connected to the body intimately, the mind also gets relaxed at that time, together with the relaxation of the nerves and the muscles. For a few minutes you can meditate even in that posture. It is not necessary that you sit up with a rigidity of feeling at the outset.

As long as it is comfortable and possible for you to contemplate your ideal even in that posture of lying on the back, let it be; continue, because the mind will not enable you to concentrate on anything when the body is feeling any kind of pain or discomfort. When you catch hold of the mind, you cannot reject the body. The rider on the ass is connected with the ass, so you cannot displease the ass when you are riding on it.

Body and mind go together, as a psycho-biological individuality. You cannot say you are the body, or are not the body, -you are the mind, or you are not the mind. These statements have no meaning, finally. It is a child's definition of what you are. You are an integrated affirmation, wherein are blended both the mental structure and the physical structure. So, a kind of relaxation caused by satisfaction of having achieved an end should follow simultaneously with the effort at meditation.

But it is not an effort, actually speaking, because Patanjali has told you "*prayatna shaithilya*": loosen your tension of effort. Don't say, "I am doing something," because this consciousness of doing something is again an assertion of individuality and a potential of egoism manifesting itself.

Just be in a state of complete psycho-physical relaxation, either by lying down, or in any other comfortable posture. Really, for the purpose of meditation, there is no particular posture prescribed. As is comfortable, so is the posture. The Yoga Shastra (texts) does not say, "Sit only in this posture." Though sometimes for certain reasons a particular seated posture is suggested, every rule has an exception. In a similar manner, this general instruction to be seated with spine erect and neck straight, etc., can be regarded as a very practicable posture, provided that you don't feel any discomfort in that posture. Dissatisfaction of any kind should not precede the effort at meditation. How the Yoga practice commences is stated in this manner in the Yoga texts.

I will repeat once again what I told you yesterday: be clear as to what you are seeking. The object of meditation is the final choice that you make in this world. You have selected it as the ultimate meaning for your life. There are people who cling to a certain thing throughout their lives and consider that particular thing as the be-all and the end-all of their lives. Rightly or wrongly, they have hugged that particular thing through their emotional clamouring. But this is a treacherous attitude of the emotions. It will leave you in the dark at any moment.

Nobody likes a thing continuously throughout one's life. That is the effect of the fickleness of mental activity. In the choice of the object of meditation, no fickleness is possible. You may take months to decide what it is that can give you true satisfaction.

There are devotees who choose the form of a divinity, the ultimate Godhead manifest before them in some form which they regard as final. The reason why they consider that form as final is that they are sure that the infinite longing for salvation is centralised in that particular form of divinity, as the potentiality of the power of the sun is hidden in a single ray of the sun. So, the whole world is one object.

You strike one object to the core; an atomic bomb manifests itself. Strike it further; you will find the treasures of the world coming up from inside the very object that you have struck again and again by the hammering of the mental process. Strike it further; you will find that this mind which meditates is the meeting point of all the levels of creation commingling in one point, like the sea at the meeting point of a river, where the two become one. Even in this initial stage of meditation, you will see that you rise up from meditation as a new individual, as if something has entered you, has been injected into you.

Old habits still persist. A *sutra* (verse) of Patanjali tells us: Never feel satisfied with any experience, because any satisfying experience in meditation, -sound, colour, perception of beauty, fragrance, -should not attract you because it is as temporary and tantalizing as any other presentation in this physical world.

Actually, what you call heaven is only a rarefied form of earthly enjoyment. A highly potent form of sensory experience is heaven; the gross form of it is the earth. When such presentations are, placed before you, don't smile, "Oh they have come. Wonderful!" No, it is a mask put on by a tremendous deceptive force before you.

The world opposes you in the beginning. Vehemently will it oppose you, and it will see that you do not succeed. People will harass you, condemn you, criticise you, say that you are a crack, and the world will present further difficulties, causing you to tremble in your person, as if you have gone wrong. I have told many a time on earlier occasions, when you churn the mind for the sake of treasures that you seek, the treasure will not come; only poison comes, as illustrated in the story of *amritamanthana* in the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana. Wanting nectar, you churn the ocean; deadly poison comes in the beginning.

What is this poison, actually? Wherefrom has it arisen? It is the potentiality of attachment still persisting at the last moment of the death of individuality. When a cobra is about to die, it becomes most poisonous; if it strikes at that time, it is a death strike. Likewise, the last kick that human desire gives you is a poisonous smoke of discomfiture and sorrow, and indecision of every kind. Do you know how many treasures afterwards slowly arose from the churning of the ocean in *amritamanthana*? Some fourteen gems are described there as the jewels of human love, tempting more and more as the succeeding ones rose up, so that the temptation to possess it rose in greater intensity. Finally, you know what happened to these people who wanted nectar in this enlightening story.

This is a story about our own selves, -the gods and the demons, the ocean, the nectar, the treasures, the jewels, the poison. All these are inside us, inside in every sense of the term, outwardly, inwardly, and also in the blend of both sides. Knowing well that such things are possible before us, through the guidance that we have received from our Master, whom we should not desert till the end of our lives, -knowing this well, march forward.